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ABSTRACT

The responsiblity of the school in dealing with children of divorced parents was studied. An annotated bibliography provides a guide to sources offering suggestions for school personnel seeking greater understanding of the problem of divorce. The bibliography is divided into sections on: (1) understanding family breakdown, in which statistics, data, and profiles of families affected by divorce are given; and (2) the role of the school (administrative policy, the principal, classroom help, and support groups). (JD)

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HOW THE SCHOOLS CAN MEET THE NEEDS OF THE CHILDREN OF DIVORCE

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The director of the Yale Child Study Center in New Haven, Connecticut, Albert Solnit, stated that divorce is one of the most serious and complex mental health crises facing children of the 1980's.

An Anglo-American conference was held in 1979 in England to examine implications of the growing number of one-parent families upon schools in the two countries. A conference participant, E. Mavis Hetherington, a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford, California, summed up the new problem confronting the schools in these words: "There is a greater probability of problems in school occurring with children from single-parent families." "The achievement test scores and grades in school of children being reared in single-parent families tend to be lower than those of children living with two parents." (B. Frank Brown)

Schools are reluctant to address new family structures. It has political overtones. It may stir up issues of legality, equality, and privacy. Most prefer to support the ideal one home, two parent, all American dream. The schools must face the need for change. The Bureau of the Census projects that 48 per cent of all children born in 1980 will live with only one parent before they reach the age of 18. "In actual numbers, we are talking about more than 12 million children, and that figure is growing at the rate of more than one million a year." (Damon)

Recent Studies in the Field

Judith Wallerstein, a lecturer, School of Social Welfare, University of California, Berkley, and Joan B. Kelly, a clinical psychologist, Marion County, California, concluded a five-year Children of Divorce Project involving sixty families in 1976.

Doris S. Jacobson, Ph.D., Associate Professor, School of Social Welfare, University of California at Los Angeles, studied the impact of divorce on children. (1978)

Harris Goldstein, M.D., from State University of New York, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, researched effects on child of parent separation. (1978)

B. Frank Brown, Director of the Consortium for the Study of School Needs of Children from One-Parent Families, Kettering Foundation, along with the National Association of Elementary School Principals identified eighteen items designed to measure school performance and initiated a study to compare the functioning of one-parent versus two-parent children in twenty-six schools. (1980)

Lawrence A. Kurdek, Ph.D., and Albert E. Siesky, Jr., Psychology Department, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio, rated the severity of child-centered problems from questionnaires of seventy-three divorced single parents. (1978)

Parents Without Partners, Inc., an international educational organization is devoted to the interests of the single parent families and their children.

The Home and School Institute, Washington, D.C. under the direction of Dorothy Rich, conducted studies and developed materials and programs to involve parents as tutors. (1978)

The Anglo-American Conference on One-Parent Families, on which the October, 1979 issue of The National Elementary Principal was partly based, was held at Ditchley Park, Oxfordshire, England. It was co-sponsored by the National Association of School Principals.

Purpose of the Study

This study touches on the findings about the plight of these children-of-divorce in the hope that it may bring about a new awareness of possibilities when all the needed research is completed. Kids, as well as the parents, need support systems that work during times of stress. How can schools meet these needs?

Procedure of the Study

In order to bring about change in the schools in meeting new demands of the ever-increasing number of children of divorce, a greater understanding of the situation is needed. This study begins with a chapter, Understanding Family Breakdown, in which is found statistics, data, profile of the family affected by divorce. The Role of the School follows with subheadings, Administrative Policy: the Principal; Classroom Help: the Teacher; Support Group: the P.T.O. The Annotated Bibliography is alphabetized, since the summary tends to organize the ideas. The short conclusion mentions the most usable ideas.

UNDERSTANDING FAMILY BREAKDOWN

Byrne, S., "Nobody Home, the Erosion of the American Family," conversation with Urie Bronfenbrenner, Psychology Today 10: 40-42, May 1977.

Children are depending on peers, T.V., drugs, as caretakers--result--vandalism, violence. We are busy, doing other things. We just don't have time for children.

Francke, Linda Bird; Sherman, Diane; and Simons, Pamela Ellis, "The Children of Divorce," Newsweek 95:58-63, February 11, 1980.

One million children a year suffer through divorce. Boys show anger in school, bully and disrupt classroom. Girls apt to withdraw and become silent. Burden falls on schools, parents are not up to dealing with child's stress. Child should be told by both parents why divorcing--real reason, and that both still love child. Eighty per cent of children have no warning--shock, depression, denial, anger, low self-esteem, and feel they may be responsible. Six to eight fear abandonment, starvation; eight to twelve anger; teen-agers loyalty dilemma--always in middle. Twenty-five per cent of mothers receive child support.

Gershansky, Ira S.; Hainline, Louis; and Goldstein, Harris S., "Maternal Differentiation, Onset and Type of Father's Absence and Psychological Differentiation in Children," Perceptual and Motor Skills 46:1147-1152, 1978.

Children from father-absent homes had less of a correlation between mother and child scores on psychological differentiation than did children in father-present homes. If father died, then mother and child scores were more closely correlated, than if father absent due to divorce, separation, desertion.

Goldstein, Harris S., and Peck, Rosalind, "Maternal Differentiation, Father Absence and Cognitive Differentiation in Children," Arch Gen Psychiatry 29:370-373, September, 1973.

Mother's cognitive style correlates insignificantly with child's when father absent. Child from the single-parent home externalizes the source of discipline outside the family--this child has a variety of caretakers. Mother is sole source of both nurturant and discipline functions, so the child uses her for nurturing and chooses her less for discipline.

Goodman, Ellen, "The Family Isn't Dead, It's Just Changing," Carleton Voice 43:2-4, Winter, 1978.

Journalist suggests parent-sponsored extended day care in schools. "We need a service industry that really serves us, so we aren't rushing here and there doing pick-up chores. Need safe, convenience foods, need resource service to help adults go through major changes, such as divorce; need mutual support systems that replace the extended family. The community needs to be made aware."

Hammond, Janice M., "Children of Divorce: A Study of Self-Concept, Academic Achievement, and Attitudes," The Elementary School Journal 80:55-62, November, 1979.

Conducted study of 165 children from Grade 3-6, half from divorced parents. The students attended two neighboring elementary schools in low to mid-class suburban community in Michigan. No significant difference in self-concept, math, reading, immaturity, withdrawal, or peer relations between divorced and intact families. Teachers rated boys of divorced families significantly higher in school behavioral problems--acting out. Boys also rated themselves, from these families of divorce, as less happy and dissatisfied with time spent with both parents.

Hetherington, E. Mavis, "Effects of Father Absence on Personality Development in Adolescent Girls," Developmental Psychology 7:313-326, 1972.

Research testing provided evidence that early separation of fathers and children resulted in greater disruption of sex-typed behaviors in the children than later separation when identification was well under way or completed. Mothers took a harsher outlook toward males' behavior and communicated to the daughters that "maleness" was a worthless and disparaged role. Predicts three out of four children of divorce will repeat the pattern.

H.P.L., "The American Family Minus One," The National Elementary Principal, 59:10-11, October, 1979.

Divorced people have twelve times the incidence of disease than married people have. Stress is a big factor in one-parent families. Though we may be a caring society, we have failed, to a large degree, in providing support networks--schools, divorce courts, community agencies, etc., to these families.

Jacobson, Doris S., "The Impact of Marital Separation/Divorce on Children," Journal of Divorce 4:341-357, Summer, 1978.

This study compares amount of time spent with parents before and after divorce. The more time lost with father, the greater the chance of maladjustment. This study may help those seeking counseling. Stronger reactions from ages seven to thirteen than three to six, since schools can pick it up. A small child may react with "pervasive neediness" and the busy, upset mother may ignore.

Kohn, Sherwood Davidson, "Coping with Family Change," The National Elementary Principal, 59:41-50, October, 1979.

Despite the fact that about 15 per cent of all white families and almost half of all black families are headed by one parent, the image of the family--particularly among white, middle-class Americans--remains that of a father, a mother, and one or more children. Some lone parents feel so guilty--reluctant to complain to the school about any need for change. Some have a better self-image--finding support among themselves.

Kurdek, Lawrence A., Siesky, Albert E., Jr., "Divorced Single Parents' Perceptions of Child-Related Problems," Journal of Divorce 4:361-369, Summer, 1978.

Seventy-three divorced-single parents were asked to rate the severity of a variety of child-centered problems. Greatest concern--discipline, behavior problems resulting from separation and following ex-spouse's visit, and lack of available male model. Saw removal of tension and fear from home environment as greatest beneficial consequence.

Moffett, Al, "The American Family Is Alive and Well," The Saturday Evening Post 253:14-16, March, 1981.

Family breakdown is a hoax perpetuated by governmental agencies to build up their importance, their personnel, and funds. Federal government involved in antifamily policies, welfare bounties for babies born out of wedlock, promotion of adolescent sexuality. The composite family may become stronger--the larger kin networks. Most have an average of twelve to fifteen relatives in the inner circle.

Norton, Arthur J., "A Portrait of the One-Parent Family," The National Elementary Principal 59:33-35, October, 1979.

Forty-five per cent of the infants born in the U.S. in 1978 will live part of their lives, before age 18, with only one parent. This prediction has created a renewed awareness of the importance of the family as a basic social institution that fulfills needs. Norton is the chief of the Marriage and Family Statistics Branch, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. He defines families as two or more people living together, and related by blood, marriage, or adoption, and a sub-family as two of these living with relatives.

Parents Without Partners, Inc., "Children in a Single Parent Home," The Organization, Washington, D.C.

Nearly ten million children under 18 live with a mother only, one million with a father only. Households with male householder had a median income of $18,060 in 1978, compared to $7,060 for households with a female.

Rothchild, Nina, "Dear Ann Landers," South Bend Tribune, February 11, 1981.

More than ninety per cent of single-parent families are maintained by a woman. More than three-fourths of them also, must be sole support. This comes from the Council of the Economic Status of Women, St. Paul, Minnesota, June, 1979, U.S. Department of Commerce.

Rubenstein, Carin, "The Children of Divorce as Adults," Psychology Today 13:74-75, January, 1980.

Associate editor of the magazine mentioned research by E. Mavis Hetherington focused on pre-school children and parents during the two years following divorce--found a consistent pattern: initial pain, followed by feelings of fear, anger, depression, and guilt that give way, often within 18 months, to an adjustment to a new single-parent family. If child must cope with new home, new school, new step-family, takes longer. Abandoned feeling, if single parent becomes socially active. Boys, initially, often have greater difficulty--miss male model, father's discipline.

Wallerstein, Judith S., and Kelly, Joan B., "California's Children of Divorce," Psychology Today 67-76, January, 1980.

An indepth study of sixty families traces outcome of divorce over five-year period. Thirty-four per cent of the kids are happy, 29 per cent reasonably well, but 37 per cent are depressed. What counts most are the two parents' attitudes. Regular visiting pattern should be established. Good relationship with step-parent is important as is joint legal custody, and shared physical custody. Network of services needed--educational, vocational, and financial counseling.

Weiss, Robert; Heppell, T. S.; and Brown, B. Frank, "A Response to Robert Weiss," Excerpts from the Ditchley Proceedings, The National Elementary Principal 59:29-30, October, 1979.

Real separation between father and child comes at remarriage. Non-custody parent is not less interested, but now he has an alternative to the painful duty of picking child up and leaving him each time. Almost any alternative seems desirable. Advise joint custody, maintaining co-parenting. Should be forced by law to remain in child's locality. Need more women judges.

Weiss, Robert S., "Going It Alone," The National Elementary Principal 59:14-26, October, 1979.

Based on interviews with approximately two hundred single parents. They worry about money, share their chores and their responsibilities with children, who mature faster. Not much meaning to housework and child care. There is no second parent to give emotional support or pitch in when emergency arises. Most single parents can manage without new demands --will display responsibility, task, or emotional overload. Living near friends and kin helpful.

ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

Administrative Policy: the Principal

Annis, David, and Allers, Robert, "Helping the Troubled Child," The National Elementary Principal 59:65, October, 1979.

A principal and a school psychologist talk over their overlapping roles, more and more children will face emotionally draining situations. Basic therapy skills need to be developed by holding teacher and principal inservice on empathy training, led by school psychologists. Colleges should be encouraged to increase course offerings in psychology and child development for students going into teaching and school administration. Before we can teach children, we must reach them.

Brown, Frank B., "A Study of the School Needs of Children from One-Parent Families," Phi Delta Kappan 61:537-540, April, 1980.

Study reveals serious behavioral problems from children of one-parent families. Achievement test scores tend to be lower. Schools must face problem-identify children, sensitive to needs, give access to school to working parent. School services and curriculum updated, effective program in parenting. Consortium for the Study of School Needs of Children from One-Parent Families, Institute for Development of Educational Activities (I/D/E/A), a division of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation.

Damon, Parker, "When the Family Comes Apart, What Schools Can Do," The National Elementary Principal 59:66-75, October, 1979.

National Association of Elementary School Principals can lead the way in helping single parents and their children. Schools may be the only "constant." Caution is suggested in recommending and generalizing, since all evidence is not in from research. Pattern of child's response depends upon his development. Ask parents what we can do. Pay attention to families. Make all parents aware of community services. Buckley Amendment--all parents access to school records.

Fantini, Mario, "Disciplined Caring," Phi Delta Kappan 62: 182-184, November, 1980.

Need to introduce a curriculum for "caring" into the schools, since family and church has lost roots for caring. Community service programs in which school children help after school in hospitals, day-care centers, etc. Tutorial programs in which better students help others. Help in "athons" for charity. Make gifts for elderly. Help children develop into warm, loving human beings.

Parents Without Partners, Inc., "Separation and Divorce: Annotated Bibliography of Selected Literature for Children and Teens. Also Recommended Reading for Parents," The Organization, Washington, D.C.

Bibliography of the best books about families of divorce. Recommended for school libraries.

Parents Without Partners," When the Family Comes Apart: Where to Get Help," The National Elementary Principal 59:84-85, October, 1979.

The schools can refer parents to outside groups that offer support, counseling, and advice.

Ricci, Isolina, "Divorce, Remarriage and the Schools," Phi Delta Kappan 60:509-511, March, 1979.

Schools resist acknowledging new family structures because of legal issues surrounding custody, a desire to protect the student's and family's privacy, a feeling that treating all families equally means treating them in a "one-home" style, an underlying fear that to acknowledge divorce and remarriage openly in procedures and policies will somehow withdraw support for the ideal one-home family, and finally, the budget constraints that make it hard for schools to meet the changing needs of families.

Z., S.B., "Families in Crisis: What Principals Say," The National Elementary Principal, 59:82-83, October, 1979

Ninety-five per cent of 131 principals polled agree that children do show special behavioral and academic problems when parents are undergoing separation or divorce. Schools should be notified. Custody battles can pose a problem to school. Ideas of what schools can do--Evening conferences, library books about changing families, extended day-care, counseling, breakfast, etc.

Classroom Help: the Teacher

Black, Kathryn Norcross, "What About the Child from a One-Parent Home?" Teacher, 96:24-28, January, 1979.

Teacher can sympathize by calmly stating suspect reaction to family situation. Present a unit on family at any grade level. Hearing a positive story from a child who has adjusted in the past may help. Unit on feelings helps child understand. Make psychological resources available when needed. (PTO) Parent Teacher Organization should involve single parents.

Jenkins, Gladys; Shacter, Helen, Ph.D.; and Bauer, W. W., M.D., These Are Your Children, Scott, Foresman and Company, Chicago, Illinois, 1953.

Teacher encouraged to hold frank group discussions about feelings. Children are helped to gain skill in handling their own problems. When difficulties can be brought out, there is less danger that children will grow dependent upon daydreams, illness, or bullying to hide real feelings. Basic needs: to feel loved, belong, wanted, success. If these needs are not met at any point, his progress may stop or go backward.

Kelly, Joan B., and Wallerstein, Judith S., "How Schools Can Help with Children of Divorce," The National Elementary Principal, 59:51-58, October, 1979.

Kelly reports indepth study of sixty families of divorce over five-year period. Determining factors in child's reaction to divorce are: 1. age and development; 2. personality; 3. psychological ambience of divorcing period; 4. amount of conflict between parents. Stress signs that teacher can spot are anxiety, restlessness, lack of concentration, sadness, depression, loss of friends. Teacher may not know how to help. Schools provide structure, routine social life, friendly teacher. Teacher-aware, willing, accepting attitude helpful.

Palker, Patricia, "How to Deal with the Single-Parent Child in the Classroom," Teacher 97:51-54, September, 1980.

Guidelines listed for single-parent children in the classroom. Teacher aware and accepting that family structures are not alike, all can be happy homes. Be patient and listen for change in child. Encourage both parents to confer, single parent group, children's group. Read books on children of divorce, suggest books to parents, library keep supply, hold after-school activities for depressed child. Obtain a speaker from Mental Health Association to speak to teachers.

Riser, Judith A., "An Open Letter to the Schools," The National Elementary Principal, 59:81-85, October, 1979.

Child may have lived through the crisis before it's made public. All tend to keep quiet. At the time the divorce is announced all things can now be said. This is the time the teacher should know and understand. Then the return to normalcy takes place and no labels should be attached.

Sutherland, Zena, Arbuthnot, May Hill, Children and Books, Scott, Foresman and Company, Dallas, Texas, 1977.

Teachers need to read to and make available books to all children that contain stories satisfying basic needs--books that emphasize security, belonging, being loved, need for change, and having fun. The right book can give increased insight into child's own personal problems and social relationships. Excellent source of book reviews.

Support Group: the P.T.O.

Brandt, Ron, "On Families and Schools: A Conversation with Urie Brontenbrenner," Educational Leadership 36:459-463, April, 1979.

U. Brontenbrenner: We are busy doing other things. We don't have time for children. People are expected to raise children in spare time. Need national program of child care, since parents are working. Schools need a program "for caring."

Schools are separate from the community. People don't know what's going on. Segregated classrooms breed alienation. Schools must allow kids to be a part of community. Fill classroom with people to say "Reading is important."

Falk, Phyllis L. Clay, "One Out of Five and Largely Ignored," The National Elementary Principal, 59:76-80, October, 1979.

Some parents have difficulty communicating with the schools, others do not. Some feel school should be informed of divorce, and others fear labeling of child. Single parents differ as does each child. National Committee of Citizens for Education (NCCE) has planned to publish a handbook on methodology for one-parent teams working with public schools. Other materials developed.

National Committee of Citizens for Education, "Single Parent Families: How Do the Public Schools Treat Them?" Report, 1978.

1,237 single-parents from 47 states responded to questionnaire. Found that:

1. School-related meetings should be timed conveniently;
2. Sitter service should be provided during meetings;
3. Parents need to be aware of treatment in books;
4. Parents should contact publishers if want change;
5. Parents must speak out if want changes at school;
6. Teachers attitudes should reflect awareness, tolerance, and acceptance.

Rich, Dorothy; Mattox, Beverly; and Van Dien, James, "Building on Family Strengths: The Non-deficit Involvement Model for Teaming Home and School," Educational Leadership 36:506-510, April, 1979.

Schools need help in finding ways to work with parents, parents need assistance in translating basic "caring" into action. Home-Learning-Recipes, developed by Home and School Institute, Washington, D.C., have been used successfully by Benton Harbor, Michigan schools in Title I program. Evidence supports participation of parents as tutors, after training, include how to improve family life.

SUMMARY

Parents Without Partners reports nearly 10 million children under 18 live with a mother as provider, whose median income is $7,060. Only one-fourth of these homes draw child support. Most of the one-parent homes, then, have no one home to tend the kids. "Forty-five per cent of the infants born in the U.S. in 1978 will live part of their lives, before age 18, with only one parent." (Norton) Many school principals, who are leading the way to awareness, know that these children do show special behavioral and academic problems when parents are undergoing separation or divorce. Schools should be notified, during the stressful period, in order to support the child and watch for signs of anxiety. Such signs may be restlessness, lack of concentration, sadness, depression, loss of friends. Schools provide structure and friendly teacher, who should be aware and have an accepting attitude. "The determining factors in child's reaction to divorce are: 1. age and development; 2. personality; 3. psychological ambience of divorcing period; 4. amount of conflict between parents." (Kelly) The divorce brings lack of male model for child, and behavior problems, although studies indicate that after divorce the return to peace brings less tension and fear in the home. Since mother is sole source of both nurturant and discipline functions, she is used for nurturing and less for discipline. The child usually has a variety of caretakers, says Goldstein, and may even look to peers, T.V., drugs, and streets for caring.

Hammond's study of one hundred sixty-five children showed no significant difference in self-concept, math, reading, immaturity, withdrawal or peer relations between divorced and intact families. Teachers rated the boys of divorced families significantly higher in school behavior problems--acting out. The Saturday Evening Post reported that family breakdown is a hoax, perpetuated by governmental agencies to build up their importance, their personnel, and funds. "Most families have a composite of from twelve to fifteen relatives in the inner circle." (Moffett)

"Schools resist acknowledging new family structures because of legal issues surrounding custody, a desire to protect the student's and family's privacy, a feeling that treating them in a 'one home' style, an underlying fear that to acknowledge divorce and remarriage openly in procedures and policies will somehow withdraw support for the ideal one-home family, and finally, the budget constraints that make it hard for schools to meet the changing needs of families." (Ricci)

"Some parents have difficulty communicating with schools, other do not. Some feel schools should be informed of divorce, and others fear labeling of child. Single parents differ, as does each child." (Falk)

"There is a need to introduce a curriculum for 'caring' into the schools, since family and church have lost roots for caring. Community service program in which school children help after school in hospitals, day-care, etc. Tutorial program, in which better students help others." (Fantini) "Schools

are separate from the community. People don't know what's going on. Segregated classrooms breed alienation. Schools must allow kids to be a part of the community. Fill the classroom with people to say, 'Reading is important.'" (Brandt) This community spirit will help fulfill need to meet basic desires of all children: to feel loved, to belong, to feel wanted, to succeed. If these desires are not met at any point, progress may stop or go backward.

It is important that each child is accepted and all family structures understood as O.K. No labels need to be attached to a child of divorce. The attitude of the teacher, and all school personnel must be one of empathy during crisis, and acceptance during period of adjustment. The teacher should patiently listen for change in the child, encourage both parents to confer, or at least accept school announcements. The Buckley Amendment, or Family Rights and Privacy Act, made it possible for all parents to see records.

"Basic therapy skills need to be developed by holding teacher inservice on empathy training led by school psychologist. Colleges should be encouraged to increase course offerings in psychology and child development. Before we can teach children we must reach them." (Annis)

Open discussion or units of study on the family, varying structures, and feelings can be presented at any grade level to help child gain skill in handling own problems. Parents Without Partners has published a list of recommended books on

the subject of one-parent families for all ages. It is worthwhile to keep the school library, classroom and parent groups supplied and aware of these. Teachers often read such books aloud to groups of children.

Conferences, programs for parents should be scheduled at convenient evening hours if possible, with child-care service available. An extended day-care facility sponsored by parent groups or community agency is desirable. Hours before school might include breakfast. After school activities help the depressed child, or child who has no one at home before the dinner hour.

The National Association of Elementary School Principals has taken an active role in studying changes to help single parents and their children. "Caution is suggested in recommending and generalizing, since all evidence is not in from research." (Damon) Schools must look at this problem seriously, identify the children-in-stress, be sensitive to the needs, and give access to school to the working parent. School services and curriculum need to be updated.

A counselor should hold group or individual sessions, as needed, with parents or children. A community agency is recommended for long-range work, since the schools are not open in the summer. Teachers can pay close attention to families. The school may be the only "constant" contact for families-of-divorce. The school newsletter may list referral agencies that offer support and counsel.

The National Committee of Citizens for Education (NCCE) has planned to publish a handbook on methodology for one-parent teams working with public schools. Suggestions came, following the group's questionnaire to 1,237 single parents, as reminders to teachers and parents. The teacher's attitude was mentioned as extremely crucial. Parents need to be aware of the treatment of varying family structures in textbooks, library books, contact publishers if want change. Assertiveness in speaking out on school policy is necessary for change.

An effective program of parenting could be the help the schools need in finding ways to work with parents. "Parents need assistance in translating basic 'caring' into action. Home-Learning-Recipes developed by Home and School Institute, Washington, D.C. have been used successfully by Benton Harbor, Michigan Schools in Title I program. Evidence supports participation of parents as tutors." (Rich) Included in the parenting program should be behavioral management techniques and how to improve family life.

Schools cannot alter the increasing number of children affected by divorce, but teachers can help children accept the reality of the situation and help them strive for academic success.

CONCLUSION

Recent studies suggest caution in recommending and generalizing as commendable since all evidence from research is not in. (Damon) The National Association of Elementary School Principals has lead in helping the schools meet the needs of the children of divorce. Phyllis L. Clay Falk indicated there are as many ideas of needs as there are people, some want to share the news of a family breakdown with the teacher so that she has the whole picture, others want to conceal to avoid labels.

"The image of the family is still a father, mother, child, or children, despite the fact that 15 per cent of all white families and almost half of all black families are headed by one parent. Changes are taking place." (Wallerstein) A family, whatever its makeup, is a basic social institution that fulfills needs. "All parents, custody, non-custody, and step-parents should be encouraged to share in the affairs of the school, and cooperate, as much as possible in the nurture of the child even to the extent of tutoring in schoolwork." (Rich) Women want careers, and often child care breaks down. It, then, becomes a social problem says Kohn. Extended day care is a strong possibility to meet this need according to Goodman and others.

Damon also suggested that the pattern of the response to divorce depends upon the child's development and the extent of hostility between the two parents. A statement of truth from each parent is owed the child, L. B. Francke indicates in her study. Lines of communication between each parent and child

is extremely important. According to Wallerstein a child is able to accept an extended family and adjusts more quickly when all are at peace. If long-term counseling is advised, a community agency can best handle, since schools are not in session part of the year, states Kohn.

Again Damon's studies reveal that a teacher is wise to include open discussion during units on family, and divorce. Often a child will benefit by hearing how others live and react. Kelly and Damon, in two separate publications tell us that the attitude of the teacher toward varying family structures has an effect on what may be expected from the one-parent child. There is a need for in-service classes to bring the latest findings to the classroom teacher, who then will be aware and sensitive to the needs of the children-of-divorce, according to Kohn.

"A curriculum for 'caring,'" says Fantini, "would open up the community to the classroom." Tutoring could be done by interested adults, or better students helping others. "Evidence supports participation of parents as tutors." (Rich)

A library of suitable books, as recommended by Parents Without Partners, increases the child's understanding of the situation. This support group, along with other findings, recommends an effective program of parenting. Kelly indicates the adult education programs could focus on divorce, child management, running a home, and how to tutor your own child, mentioned by Rich.

It is the opinion of this author that to involve a parent-of-divorce in a well-planned series of training sessions in such matters, while at the same time furnishing a child care facility, would be commendable. Future studies will have to include the long-range implications of such groups on the well-being and academic improvement of the children.